Introduction: Emotional Expression

Joel Smith and Catharine Abell

Theorists of emotion typically recognize a number of features common to them: emotions are intentional, being directed towards objects in one's environment (including oneself); emotions involve the evaluation or appraisal of those objects as possessing various positive or negative values; emotions feel a certain way, in that there is something it is like to undergo an emotional experience; and finally emotions are expressed, involving a readiness or disposition to move one's body in a number of ways. Emotional expression in its variety – the topic of this volume of essays – is a phenomenon with which we are intimately familiar. It is something that we experience, both in ourselves and others, on a daily basis. As Edith Stein wrote, somewhat poetically,

> I blush for shame, I irately clench my fist, I angrily furrow my brow, I groan with pain, am jubilant with joy […] as I live through the feeling, I feel it terminate in an expression or release expression out of itself. (Stein [1917]1970: 51)

But is a phenomenological description such as this supported by the scientific study and philosophical analysis of emotional expression? What is it for something to be an emotional expression and how do such expressions relate to other aspects of human psychology and behaviour? A common thought is that emotional expressions serve to communicate the emotional state of the expresser; indeed, the facial expression of emotion is often taken as the paradigm case in which the psychological states of others are made manifest to us (see, e.g., McNeill 2012; Smith 2013). Is this common-sense picture correct? In what sense can emotional expressions be thought of as communicative and what is it that they communicate? Further, emotional expressions are naturally thought to be subject to certain norms: a particular facial

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expression is required for an apology to be considered sincere, another when receiving a gift and so on. What, we may ask, is the role of such norms in guiding our emotional behaviour and how do they interact with the 'release' of emotional expression that Stein speaks of? These questions are amongst those pursued in the chapters of this volume and may be thought to fall under three broad headings: the nature of emotional expression, the communicative role of emotional expression and the normative significance of emotional expression.

Before setting out these issues in more detail, however, we should say something about the interdisciplinary nature of the volume. Although each individual chapter comes to the subject of emotional expression from the perspective of one discipline in particular – philosophy, psychology or legal theory – all draw connections between their own themes and those addressed in a variety of other chapters in the volume. This is important since, to date, research in these three disciplines has been insufficiently integrated. For example, the philosophical focus on the nature of expression – one, in part, motivated by the use of the concept of expression in accounts of ethical language (Gibbard 1990) and self-awareness (Bar-On 2004) – has often relied on intuition rather than drawn on the extensive body of relevant psychological research. Psychological work, in its turn, although paying great attention to the specific mechanisms underpinning different facial expressions, has sometimes lacked an appreciation of what it is that makes something an expression of emotion at all. Finally, work on the topic within legal and political contexts would benefit from a more substantial engagement with both philosophical and psychological work on the nature and communicative role of emotional expression.

In the remainder of this introduction, therefore, not only do we expand on the three themes – the nature of emotion, the communicative role of emotion and the normative significance of emotion – we also draw connections between discussions of these issues within our three disciplines.

I.1 The Nature of Emotional Expression

Emotional expressions can be divided into expressions of emotion, on the one hand, and behaviour that is merely expressive of emotion, on the other. This is a distinction familiar from related discussions in aesthetics (Bennett, this volume; Davies 1994: Ch. 4; Hospers 1954–1955). As we use the term, some piece of a subject's behaviour can be an expression

of emotion only if there is in fact some emotion that the subject is in and that bears an appropriate relation to the expression. A piece of behaviour that is merely expressive of emotion need not meet this condition. Thus, someone may simulate joy by smiling. This may be expressive of joy, but it is not an expression of joy. So, although all emotional expressions are expressive of emotion, not all are expressions of emotion, since some are merely expressive. Of course, not all expression is emotional expression at all. Our utterances express our opinions, for example (see Green 2007 for an account of expression that generalises to a wide variety of cases). Our primary concern in this introduction, however, and the primary concern of the various contributors to this volume, is with emotional expressions that are expressions of emotion.

Many different forms of behaviour can be thought of as expressions of emotion. At one end of the spectrum we have behaviour intuitively characterised as voluntary action that expresses emotion (Bennett, Helm, Price, all in this volume). Paradigm cases of such actions would include jumping for joy or slamming a door in rage. Actions that express emotions – what Hursthouse (1991) calls 'arational actions' – have been the focus of much of the philosophical work on emotional expression for the reason that they have seemed difficult to fit into a widely accepted account of action explanation. On this account, actions are explained by belief–desire pairs (Davidson 1963). Annie opens the door because she wants to leave the house and believes that opening the door is a way to achieve that; Bob turns left because he wants to visit the supermarket and he believes that it is to his left and so on. Actions that express emotions present a puzzle for this view (one discussed in Bennett's chapter in this volume), since they seem to be actions – angrily slamming the door is, after all, something that I choose to do and for which I may be held accountable – yet not easily explained in such a manner. It is not at all clear what belief–desire pair could explain Caroline's jumping for joy, since it seems not to be a means to any end.

At the other end of the spectrum we have seemingly involuntary facial expressions of emotion, for example, wrinkling one's nose at a disgusting smell, or smiling at a joke (see Baker, Black and Porter, this volume; Hwang and Matsumoto, this volume). It is with the analysis of the face and facial expressions of emotion that most psychological work in the area has been concerned. Stimulated by Darwin's ([1872]2009) ground-breaking study, there was an explosion of psychological research on facial expression in the latter half of the twentieth century. Much of this research has been undertaken by proponents of a family

of views with roots in work by Tomkins (1962), Izard (1971) and Ekman and Friesen (1975). Broadly sketched, and ignoring disputes between proponents, this picture involves the postulation of a small number of discrete 'basic' emotions, typically including happiness, sadness, anger, disgust, fear, surprise and contempt. Each of these is associated with a characteristic facial expression which is automatically triggered as an individual enters into the emotional state (see Hwang and Matsumoto, this volume).

Lying between the cases of action and facial expression are a range of behaviours that are also intuitively thought to express emotion. For example, emotion is expressed not just through the face but through the whole body and done so in a way that need not involve action (Matsumoto and Hwang 2013; Wallbott 1998). Like facial expression, such bodily expression may be largely involuntary. A slumped posture, for example, may express grief, while a relaxed demeanour may express happiness. In addition, not only is emotion expressed in the movements of the body (face or otherwise), it is expressed also in a wide variety of vocalisations: from a growl of anger or exclamation of surprise, all the way to the subtle tone of voice that tells us that an utterance of 'Fine' means anything but (Frank, Maroulis and Griffin 2013; Kappas, Hess and Scherer 1991). Such vocal expressions of emotion, it would seem, span the range from involuntary to voluntary.

In each case, we can inquire into the role of biology, culture and context in producing both these emotional expressions and observers' subsequent judgements as to the emotional state of the expressing subject. For example, proponents of the view of facial expression that we sketched earlier typically argue that the basic emotions and associated facial expressions are a universal feature of human psychology (Ekman 1980; Hwang and Matsumoto, this volume). They thus form part of a biological core of human nature. This broad picture of emotion and emotional expression has, of course, been challenged in a number of ways and from a number of directions (see various chapters in Russell and Fernández-Dols 1997). For example, the claim that there is a small number of discrete basic emotions is questioned by proponents of dimensional approaches (Feldman Barrett 2006; Russell 2003, and this volume); the claim that the onset of emotion automatically triggers the associated facial expression has been challenged by naturalistic studies (Fernández-Dols and Crivelli 2013); the claim to universality has been challenged on a variety of grounds (Jack, this volume; Russell, this volume); and even the claim

that emotional expressions are typically caused by emotions has been challenged from the direction of ethology (Fridlund 1994).

That emotional expression appears to admit significant biological and cultural diversity raises the issue of the unity of the category of emotional expression. What features do these seemingly diverse phenomena share? Aside from the concern with action, mentioned earlier, philosophers working in this area have been keen to give an account of the nature of emotional expression (see Bennett, Green, Helm, Price, and Sias and Bar-On, all in this volume). An initial attempt to describe what is aimed for here might be to say that we want an account of what all and only emotional expressions have in common. But philosophical theories typically aspire to more than this, demanding not only an account of what emotional expressions in fact have in common, but also an account of what they must have in common. Only such an account, it might be thought, would provide us with the essence of emotional expression; with what it is that makes something an emotional expression as opposed, for example, to mere behaviour caused by emotion. For, although most would agree that a piece of behaviour's being caused by emotion is a necessary condition of being an emotional expression; few would consider this to be a sufficient condition. Anger may cause someone to bite their tongue but few would consider this to be an expression of anger.

Different accounts of the nature of emotional expression will have different consequences regarding whether difficult cases count as expressions of emotion because they will draw the line differently between expressions of emotion and mere behaviour caused by emotion. A case in point is blushing which, although classified as an expression of embarrassment by some views, is denied that status by others. Davis's (1988) account in terms of indication, according to which expressions must be sufficient to justify observers in believing that the subject is in the psychological state in question, appears to count blushes as genuine expressions. However, according to Green's (2007) signalling account, expressions must be designed to convey the information that the subject is in the relevant psychological state, a condition which he suggests blushing does not meet (2007: Ch. 2).

I.2 The Communicative Role of Emotional Expression

The two conceptions of expression just sketched tie the nature of emotional expression to the communication of information to observers.

Indeed, the role of emotional expression in our awareness of others' psychological states is something that has occupied both philosophers and psychologists in recent years. Accounts of the mechanisms under-pinning, and the rational grounds for, our judgements about others' mentality sometimes appeal to emotional expression as making the psychological states of others manifest to observers (McNeill 2012; Smith 2013). Unlike our judgements about what other people believe or intend – which are typically considered to involve inferences based on either the application of a tacitly held theory of mind (Segal 1995) or the off-line simulation of their mental life (Goldman 2006) – it is some-times claimed that our judgements about others' emotional states are grounded in perception with no need for such theorising or simulat-ing (see Green, this volume; Sias and Bar-On, this volume). Emotional expressions, to adapt the familiar phrase, seem to be a window to the soul.

These deliverances of common sense tally with the basic emotions approach sketched earlier, according to which observers are typically able to recognize emotional expressions precisely as expressions of the basic emotions regardless of cultural differences. Indeed, psychologists working on emotion recognition often speak of it as a perceptual pro-cess (e.g., Feldman Barrett, Lindquist and Gendron 2007; Hess, Adams and Kleck 2009; Hess and Hareli, this volume).

Accounts of expression as involving the communication of emo-tion must say what notion of communication they employ. There are, broadly speaking, three varieties that could be distinguished. The first, which can quickly be put aside, thinks of communication as the mere transmission and receipt of information. It is clear that emo-tional expressions transmit a great deal of information that a suitably endowed observer will be able to pick up on. Much of it, however, will be irrelevant to our concerns. Smiling, for example, transmits informa-tion about the shape and colouration of one's teeth, but this is of little interest to theorists of emotion and emotional expression. It seems that a more restrictive conception of communication is required.

One such conception construes communication as the intentional transmission of information (in some reasonably liberal sense of 'inten-tional'). Linguistic communication, by and large, fits this model. Thus, an utterance of 'I am happy' intentionally communicates, to those within earshot, the information that one is happy. It might be thought that some emotional expression is of this sort. For example, one might pull a 'sad face' in order to let others know that one is disappointed.

Plausibly, however, the majority of emotional expressions will not count as communicative in this sense for the reason that they are involuntary. Intentionally doing something is surely a way of voluntarily doing it (though the converse is not true; see Anscombe 1957: §49). Spontaneous and involuntary emotional expressions are not realistically thought of as intended. The model, then, is really suitable only for those emotional expressions that are actions. More than this, some philosophers will reject the idea that there can be such a thing as an intended emotional expression, arguing that a necessary condition on being an emotional expression proper is that it not be done in order to achieve some further end, including that of communication (e.g., Goldie 2000: Ch. 5). On this conception of communication, then, at least the majority of emotional expressions will fail to be communicative.

An alternative way of thinking about communication is in terms of behaviour whose function it is to transmit information. Following Green (2007), something can have a function, x, either because it was designed by evolution, or designed by culture, to do x. This distinction might be thought of as one between natural and conventional functions. So, the markings on poisonous frogs have been designed by evolutionary processes to communicate danger, whereas the red flashing lights on various road systems have been culturally designed for a similar purpose. This provides a conception of communication that is, at least potentially, sufficiently flexible to accommodate all emotional expressions. It may be that some emotional expressions have been designed by natural selection pressures to communicate the information that one is in certain psychological states, for example, the smile to communicate happiness. On the other hand, perhaps some emotional expressions have been designed by the workings of particular cultures to communicate psychological states, for example the eye-roll to communicate exasperation or contempt.

This conception of emotional communication encompasses the previous one, since all behaviour that qualifies as the intentional communication of emotion thereby has the function of communicating emotion. But it is not limited to intentional communication, since functions may be designed by natural or cultural forces beyond the ken of the individual. On this construal, it becomes a largely empirical question whether expressive behaviour is communicative and, if so, exactly what is communicated.

The most natural response to these questions is that, yes, emotional expressions are communicative and that they communicate the

emotions they express. Such a view would follow, for example, from the claim that emotional expressions, although perhaps evolving for some other purpose, have subsequently been co-opted into the service of such a communicative role, perhaps being modified along the way so as to better perform this function (Shariff and Tracy 2011). On this popular view, one arguably derived from Darwin, the basic emotions are what are expressed and communicated by the characteristic facial expressions with which common sense associates them.

Such a position, although popular, is not uncontroversial. Proponents of the basic emotions approach claim that the basic emotions involuntarily cause the associated facial expression (Baker, Black and Porter, this volume; Hwang and Matsumoto, this volume). But this has been challenged. Fridlund (1994), for example, argues that evolutionary pressures would not give rise to such a 'leakage' of information about emotion. Rather, he claims, emotional expressions (or, to avoid the impression of begging the question, 'emotionally expressive facial behaviour') do not express emotion at all. They do perform a communicative function, but their role is to communicate the preferences and intentions of the subject in question. Thus, the stereotypical 'anger face' is not typically caused by anger, nor does it communicate that information; rather it serves as a threat, communicating an intention to attack; the stereotypical 'sad face' does not communicate sadness; rather it indicates to observers that one seeks to be comforted and so on.

Another view of the communicative function of emotional expressions – one that looks ahead to the discussion of norms in Section I.3 of this introduction – is that they communicate one's evaluative stance. It is typically recognized that emotion stands in close relation to evaluation (Helm 2001). This is most clearly brought out by appraisal theories (and those views that identify emotion with evaluative judgement [e.g., Nussbaum 2001]), according to which emotions result from the evaluative appraisal of a situation. Simplified, such a view might hold that anger results from the appraisal of an event as offensive, joy from the appraisal of it as pleasing and so on (Lazarus 1991). On such a picture, one feels emotion towards things that one cares about, and one's emotional reactions are indicative of the evaluative stance that one takes towards the objects of care (Helm 2001; Price 2013). As such, it may be that at least some expressions of emotion are performed precisely in order to do justice to the evaluative landscape of the situation (Bennett, this volume), and perhaps have the function of

communicating one's emotional stance both to those that share it and to those who do not (Helm, Price and Sorial, all in this volume).

The positions sketched here are not necessarily in conflict with one another, since it may be that emotional expressions serve to communicate more than a single piece of information. There is no doubt, however, that the first view has received the most attention in the philosophical literature. As mentioned earlier, a common thought is that emotional expressions provide a distinctive way of learning of the emotional states of others. An interesting and relatively unexplored question is the extent to which this common-sense idea is affected by the different conceptions of the communicative role of emotional expression mentioned earlier.

Another question is the extent to which cultural and contextual factors affect emotional recognition. For example, Jack (2013, this volume) presents evidence against the stronger claims to universality to be found within the basic emotions approach. Does this mean that expression is a distinctive route to the knowledge of others' emotions only between members of the same cultural group? The importance of this question is magnified when we consider contexts such as the courts in which much can ride on whether judges and juries read defendants' and others' facial expressions correctly.

I.3 The Normative Significance of Emotional Expression

There are, of course, differences in the ways that individuals and cultures express emotions. According to the basic emotion approach, these are to be explained by culturally various 'display rules' or 'feeling rules' (Hwang and Matsumoto, this volume; Weisman, this volume): norms that determine when a given expression is or is not appropriate. Our third guiding question concerns the norms that govern the expression of emotion, and the relation that such norms bear to both the nature and communicative role of emotional expression.

The interest in emotional expression within legal theory and forensic psychology has tended to focus on the issues of reliability and normative import (Bandes 2014; Bennett 2012; Black et al,. 2012; Proeve and Tudor 2010). Courtrooms and other judicial settings represent very particular and highly formal contexts in which emotional expressions play an important role, not only in the context of fact-finding but also the more contested terrain of victim impact statements (Bandes, this volume; Sorial, this volume). In criminal trials, stakes are high and there is

often some motivation for defendants, victims and witnesses to appear to conform to prevailing norms. One way of doing this, of course, is either by supressing or mimicking the relevant emotional expression (see Baker, Black and Porter, this volume). Notable examples would be the suppression of expressions of anger by victims for the reason that anger can sometimes turn juries and others against them (Bandes, this volume; Sorial, this volume), or the mimicking of expressions of remorse during probation hearings and other legal and extra-legal contexts (Weisman, this volume).

As these cases indicate, not only are there norms governing emotional expression in legal contexts, but also expectations concerning the consequences of expression: for example, catharsis for victims or apology for defendants (Bandes, this volume). The case of remorse is particularly striking since its expression can mean the difference between life and death, for the reason that (perhaps only implicitly) the courts acknowledge that the expression of remorse changes the normative landscape, making harsher punishment less appropriate (Maslen 2015; Proeve and Tudor 2010; Weisman 2014).

These cases also show the significance of reliability. Judges and juries are regularly in the position of evaluating the sincerity of others' emotional expressions. Since dissimulation is possible, and the stakes often high, it is crucial to know how to spot fakers of both masking and mimicking varieties (Baker, Black and Porter, this volume). Here it is important to have a clear sense both of exactly what is communicated via emotional expression and how the recognition of emotion works in dissembling and non-dissembling cases alike. Therefore, debates within psychology concerning what and how emotional expressions communicate have an obvious impact on the philosophical question of the capacity for the observation of emotional expression to ground our knowledge of others' emotional states. This, in turn, has significance for the legitimacy of relying on emotional expressions as evidence in high-stakes legal contexts.

As hinted in the previous section, emotional expression also arguably functions as a way of communicating values and thereby consolidating group identity. The expression of anger or disapproval, for example, can act to make clear the norms concerning behaviour within particular social contexts, as can the above-mentioned expressions of remorse serve to pave the way to re-admittance into a group after wrongdoing (see Helm, this volume, on 'communities of respect', and Weisman, this volume, on the moral community).